Project I.D. No. 129

NAME: Kuzokawa, Heiji DATE OF BIRTH: 1902 PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakayama
Age: 73 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: 11 yrs.

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1915 Age: 13 M.S. Y.Y. Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Farmer 2. Manager of ranch 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Fresno 2. Madera 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Fresno
Name of relocation center: Gila, Arizona
Dispensation of property: Left with neighbor Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Dish washer 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: Raised fruits and vegetables.
Left camp to go to: West Coast

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: Aug. '45
Address/es: 1. Fowler 2. Livingston
3. Madera
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Kusunoki Date: 5/7/75 Place: Fresno
Translator: Mabel Hall

Q: I would like to ask your name first.

A: My name is Heiji Kurokawa. I was born in Wakayama Prefecture.

Q: When were you born?

A: I landed in San Francisco on March 21, 1921.

Q: What year were you born?

A: I was born in May, 1902.

Q: What kind of family were you from?

A: It was a farming family. My brother came to America in 1915 when my father summoned him, so I was thinking about coming to America. In those days our family was growing citrus fruits and were exporting them to Manchuria, so I was thinking about going there, too. My brother wanted me to come to America so that we could be partners, but in those days a brother could not summon another brother. Therefore my brother summoned his mother first, and 6 months later mother summoned me to America.

Q: Were you 19 years old when you came to America?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: I would like to ask you about the period before you came to America. What about your schooling?

A: I attended the primary school for 8 years. The high school was 5 years, but I quit after 3 years to come to America.

Q: Do you have any memories of your schooldays?

A: I don't have any special memories. I liked sports. In those days kendo (swordsmanship) was popular, so I learned it. I also liked sumo. Thinking back, memories of my classmates who studied side by side come back to my mind. When we grow old that kind of thing become fond memories.

Q: What kind of parents did you have?

A: My great grandfather was a samurai, and he went to war of 1879. I remember faintly that he had a scratch on his head. Later, my father started a business, but as he was an ex-Samurai he was not good at business. When I was 2 years old my father came to America. My mother brought 2 boys and an older sister up by herself. The year my sister graduated from high school my father summond her. It was 1915, the year of the Panama Exposition in San Francisco.

Q: Do you remember the Sino-Japanese War or the Russo-Japanese War?

A: I don't remember directly. I only learned about the wars from my teachers when I started going to school.

Q: What was the religion of your family?

A: The family religion was Buddhism. While my mother was bringing up children all alone my sister was weak and often became seriously ill. She did not know which religion to believe as people said this or that god was responsive to a person's prayer, but she finally became an ardent believer in Tenrikyo. In those days she did not have any worries in making a living, but she had worried about the children.

Q: As it was 1921, there were still some picture brides, weren't there?

A: The picture marriage was prohibited after 1924, so they could still come then.

Q: Were there many picture brides on board the ship?

A: Yes, there were. As the picture marriage was going to be prohibited after 1927, people told me to get married and bring the wife with me. I was summond by my mother to get education, and I was still young, so I did not have any intention of getting married then.

Q: Do you have recollections of the life on board the ship?

A: I did not know anybody when the ship left Kobe. There were many men who went back to Japan to take wives. They called me "young man" and took good care of me.

Q: Were there any incidents on board the ship?

A: No, I don't think anything particular happened on board the ship. During 21 days of voyage, I think I stayed up only about 10 days. The ship hit the storm, and even the crew got seasick, and we did not eat for about 3 days. I heard that flying fish would come up on the deck, so even Though I was not feeling well I went on the deck to catch flying fish as I liked fishing. It was a rough voyage.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was before you came here?

A: I had heard about America from men who went to America from our village and came home in glory. On top of that my mother and brother were in America, so I came here without any worries.

Q: What is your present religion?

A: My mother summond me, but she wanted to go back to Japan. When she received a letter from her only daughter who was married then telling mother that she had not been well since she gave birth to a baby, mother wanted to go back to Japan at once and take care of her daughter, so she went back to Japan. When she left America she told us that as there was no Tenrikyo in Northern California, we had better become Christians as America was a Christian country. My wife had been going to Methodist church ever since she was young. At the time we were going to get married I was still a Buddhist, but as it was my mother's wish we decided to get married in a Christian church. Then a monister baptized me and I became a Christian.

Q: Do you remember the name of the ship on which you came to America?

A: It was a small ship named Nihon Maru. It was the last voyage for that ship from Japan. In Japan they say that the sea is roughest in February and August. I left Kobe on 3rd or 4th of March, went to Kobe and stayed there for a day. Then we continued the voyage. We arrived in San Francisco at night of March 30, and landed on March 31. It took almost a month.

Q: Did you say it was in 1921?

A: Yes, it was. It was the last voyage for Nihon Maru.

Q: What kind of people were on board the ship? Were there anybody you knew?

A: No, there wasn't.

Q: Did you learn about America through your brother's letters?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: It wasn't a wreckless act to come to America from Wakayama Prefecture in those days, wasn't it?

A: No, it wasn't, as many people came to America from Wakayama Prefecture. I had been dreaming about living in a stately brick house when we landed in San Francisco. We got on board a train from San Francisco to Fresno. As the train went southward, I asked my sister if the house we were going to live was like this or like that, but she did not give me a definite answer. In those days even Americans in the country lived in humble cottages you cannot imagine now, without electricity but only lamps. That was the kind of house we were settled.

Q: Was it like a barn?

A: At grape harvesting season the number of workers increase, so I have lived in such a place. When I lied down on the bed I could see the stars. Unlike Japanese houses, the roof was made of think board, and after being exposed to wind and rain for many years there were spaces between the boards. Large or small we had our own houses in Japan. For about 2 years I did not feel comfortable, and sometimes I thought I would be better off if I went back to Japan. Even a man like me felt that way, so it is natural that picture brides had problems when they got here. They received pictures of their husbands-to-be taken in nice suits in front of their landlords' nice homes, and did not know anything besides what they saw in the pictures.

Q: Did you hear stories about picture brides?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: How many days did you stay in San Francisco after you landed there?

A: I stayed there for 3 nights to pick up my luggage.

Q: What was your first impression of San Francisco then?

A: In those days most transportations were streetcars, so I hardly saw any buses or taxis like now.

Q: How did you feel when you landed in San Francisco and saw people in the city?

A: I realized that I came to a foreign country. I had seen some white people in Japan before, but every person who passed by were tall and had big noses. The ship I was on was a Japanese ship, and most of the passengers were Japanese, but when I landed in San Francisco there were so many Americans that I realized that I came to a foreign country.

Q: Did you have any trouble at the Immigration office?

A: I came with a passport of a non-immigrant, so everything went smoothly. I was lucky in that respect.

Q: Did you go straight to Fresno after staying in San Francisco 3 to 4 days?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Who else were there in Fresno? Was your father there, too?

A: No, father was dead by then. As father died and my brother could not summon me, he summoned mother, and mother summonded me.

Q: Did you have one older brother?

A: Yes.

Q: Was your mother living there when you went there?

A: Yes, she was. She was there only one year before she went back to Japan.

Q: How was the language when you first got there?

A: I could get along with my broken English. The farm work is not very hard once I learned how to do it. I remember we pruned grape in winter. The forman taught me which branches to cut. Other men were older. Isseis in those days were between 40 to 50 years old, but as I was only 19, they looked old to me. When I cut the branches, the forman came and told me that I had cut some good branches. Something like pruning takes skill and experience.

Q: Did you work with Isseis?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Was the forman a white man?

A: Yes, he was.

Q: How was the life of Japanese farm laborers in those days?

A: Some people lived in camps, where they had Japanese cooks who prepared meals for them. In those days there were some Japanese food such as dried mushrooms and kanpyo(dried gourd shavings)

Q: Do you have any happy or sad memories of those days?

A: When I was 17 or 18 years old in Japan I was attending school and was not doing anything else much except helping with the housework during the vacation, so it was hard work for me to work from morning till night. After about two years I got used to the work and thought I could stand it. I was paid by the hour.

Q: How much were you paid?

A: When I came here in 1921 the wage was 45 to 50¢ an hour, so I earned $4.50 to $5 working 10 hours. Then the Depression came, and at its lowest point around 1929 to 1932 it came down to 15¢ an hour. Of course the cost of living was cheap, too, in those days. By that time I was independent, and had a farm of my own, so I was lucky. I could hire laborers cheap, but the produce was cheap, too. It was quite easy for me to manage.

Q: Did you do any other work besides grape?

A: Once my wife and I managed an apartment in Fresno city besides farming, I mainly produced grape and fruits, but I also grew melon. Some years I had much profit, and other years I did not make any money.

Q: Did you lease the land for farming?

A: Yes, I did, but it was very inconvenient . In those days the anti-Japanese land aat was in effect, and naturalized aliens could not own or lease land. As my wife had American citizenship we used her name, but before I got married I used the name of a Hawaiian who acquired American citizenship by fighting in the World War I.

Some white people who did not like Japanese frowned upon when Japanese tried to lease land, but on the other hand there were some white people who were very kind to Japanese.

Q: What kind of organizations were there that helped Japanese in those days?

A: Japanese Association was the one and only political organization. Whenever there was any trouble between Japanese and Americans they took the trouble of mediating,

Q: Was it just in Central California?

A: Each area had its own Japanese Association, and there was the Federation of all Japanese Association on top of them.

Q: Were there associations of people from different prefectures?

A: There were prefectural associations under the Japanese Association. In Central California there were many people from Hiroshima Prefecture, and they organized Hiroshima Kenjin-Kai and were doing well, so I organized

the Wakayama Kenjin-Kai. When the World War II broke out and we were evacuated it became extinct. When we came home after the war we were so busy with rebuilding our lives that we did not have time to organize the Kenjin-Kai. Moreover, counties and cities did not like Japanese to establish such organizations in those days. It is not like that now.

Q: Didn't you get any help from churches?

A: They were kind to us when we evacuated. Especially the opinions of religious organizations were regarded quite seriously. At that time I felt thankful that I belonged to a Christian church. At first we were put in a makeship assembly center in Fresno. We were allowed to take only a limited amount of belongings, so I went there with nothing but the clothes I was wearing. We were taken there by a bus from Selma. The ladies group from the white churches served refreshments and comforted us. When I think back about that time my heart is filled with deep emotion.

Q: Did you get married before the war or after the war?

A: It was before the war. We were married in 1932, at the bottom of the Depression.

Q: How were the lives of Japanese around here during the Depression?

A: I leased the land and managed a farm. In those days you could not make the ends meet if you owned the land. People who did not own land were better off. If you do not invest money in tools, and using the landlord's tool provide only the labor, you get some income. But if you manage your own farm, you have to make payments

on land, and you might get in red when you shipped fruits. In those days many people had Bank Of America reclaim the land as they could not make payments.

Q: Were there any people who found it hard to make their living?

A: There may have been some, but in those days Japanese helped each other. Nowadays if you want to start a business and need the money, you can borrow it from banks if you have some security, but in those days Japanese did not have any fixed property, so the banks did not lend them any money. Therefore, people lend money among friends and helped each other. In those days people helped each other in such warmhearted way that is unbelievable nowadays..

Q: Do you know of any story of Japanese helping each other?

A: In those days some people around Dinuba planted string beans, tomatoe and cucumber in winter and harvested them in early spring. They took the crop to markets and made good profit. It took about $300 to grow 1/acre of those produce, and $3,000 for 10 acres, but it was hard to collect that much money, so 4 to 5 people put out some money each month to help. One year we made a big profit, but on the other hand we lost money some years. There were countless times we tided over difficult situations.

Side 2

K: We farmers do not know anything but farming. I always thought it would be better if farmers take their produce directly to the market instead of having the brokers handle the produce. Therefore I bought two trucks and went into trucking business once. I packed the table grape I produced and took them to the market in San Francisco and Oakland. That was before I got married. I think it was around 1925 or 26. The market in San Francisco opened around 1 or 2 A.M., so I used to leave here around 10 o'clock the night before. One night my truck broke down in Turlock. The axel of the truck was broken, so I pulled on the roadside. It was around 11 P.M. and no garage was open, so I thouhgt I had to spend the night there. I put red lanterns in front and back of the truck and was waiting for the dawn. Then a car came by with an old couple in it. The man asked me what had happened, so I told him that the axel of my truck was broken and I could not go to the market. He told me that no garage was open but he knew the housecof a mechanic, so he would take me there. When we got there the boss of the garage said he would send for the part from a factory in Stockton by the first bus in the morning. It was around 1 A.M.

The gentleman took me to his house and took care of me serving me coffee. While we were talking I saw a picture of Jesus in the parlor, and I found out that he was a devout Christian. As he talked I could not understand some, but I understood most of what he said. I thought Christianity was a religion of love and it was a good religion. I had no intention of converting, but I could not forget what I learned through the good deed. It was 1924 or 1925, about 50 years ago but I can still remember his face.

Q: Have you met him since then?

A: Yes, every time I went by his house I took some grape and orange. He was quite old then, so I think he has passed away by now.

Q: How did you meet your wife?

A: In those days there were matchmakers. I had a friend who was an insurance agent. He lived in Fresno. My wife was from Lemore in Turare County, and her father was farming there. As I was farming by myself he told me that I should get married as it would be inconvenient to live alone. Jokingly I asked him to find a suitable wife for me, so he introduced her to me. I did not know her till then. In olden days in Japan people checked family lineage before marriage. People avoided families which had bad reputation. As she was from the same village in Japan we could check her family easily.

Q: Were you 26 years old then?

A: I was 27 or 28 years old.

Q: How were the weddings in those days?

A: In those days there were two go-betweens; one representing Kurokawa family, and the other representing the bride's family. As the insurance business was prosperous, he said we should have a big wedding, so we had a big wedding for those days. The wedding took place at a Methodist Church in Fresno.

Q: Is your brother still living here?

A: No, he died in 1963.

Q: Didn't he go back to Japan?

A: No, he didn't. I had 6 cousins living in Brazil. When they went there I gave them some American dollars to buy land there. Two cousins are growing tea and rice, and their younger brother had a grocery store in San Paulo. As we were so to speak partners they wanted us to visit them, so we went there in 1963. The life style in the city of San Paulo was not much different from here, but the tea was grown in the country. It was grown on the slope of a hill so that the water would run downhill when it rained. They grow rice on the flat ground. When we arrived there we received a telegram from my sister-in-law saying that my brother was seriously ill. The next moring we recieved another telegram saying that he had passed away. As we had just got there, we did not go back for the funeral.

Q: Didn't you see him on his deathbed?

A: No, we didn't. I don't know why but it always happens that way. Before my mother passed away in 1945 we received a telegram from Japan telling us that she was seriously ill. We were getting ready to go back to Japan, but in those days we could not leave America until we wrote to Washington and got a permission to leave as we were considered enemy aliens. I was told that it would take about a month to get that permission. Then we heard that my mother had passed away. It was no use going back to Japan after she died, and further more we had not received the persmission to leave, so we did not go back to Japan.

Q: How many children do you have?

A: I have 3 children; one son and two daughters.

Q: Where and how did you find out about the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: It was Sunday morning. In those days we were living in Madera. That morning I had taken my oldest daughter to the Japanese Language school and came back. When I picked her up from school and came home she told me that Japanese seemed to have attacked Pearl Harbor. That was the first time I heard the news. We were expecting something like that might happen sooner or later, but we did not think it would happen so suddenly. In those days I used to listen to news from Japan by a short wave radio.

Two days after the Pearl Harbor attack, the sheriff of Madera County came to my house with two deputy sheriffs to search my house. At that time my two daughters had gone to school, but my youngest son had a cold so he was staying home and was listening to the radio. They came in the house and started looking around the house. They asked me why the boy was not in school, so I told them that I had let him stay home as he had a cold. They started asking me if I had cameras or rifles. I told them I had one or two rifles, so they listed them. In those days we lived in a two-storied house. We had a habit of buying a whole years supply of rice when it came out in mid-October or in November and stored them. At that time I had 15 sacks of 100lbs bags of rice. A friend of mine who had a grocery store in Hawaii told me that sugar ~~may~~ might become short, so I had bought 400 pounds of sugar. I had put them in boxes that we put

200 pounds of raisin. I had put 2,000 pounds of rice and sugar in sacks, and putting 2 sacks in each box and piled up the boxes. The sheriff asked me what I was going to do storing so much food. He asked me if I was going to feed the Japanese Army when they landed here. I didn't know if he was joking or not, but I did not feel comfortable. I had put some clothes we did not wear in 2 or 3 trunks and put them upstairs. They asked me what were in the trunk, so I told them that there were some clothes we did not use everyday in them. The sheriff told me to open the trunks, so I went downstairs and got a key bunch. I knew there was a portrait of the Emperor and a Japanese sword in one of the trunks. We were told that Dr. Taira's father was arrested by FBI and was taken away for having the Emperor's portrait, so we had telephone message to destroy or hide the Emperor's portraits. I had hidden it between a quilt in a trunk. As I tried to open the trunks my had trembled and none of the keys opened the trunk, and I did not know what to do. Then the sheriff told me that I did not have to open the trunks, so I was saved. After the Manchurian War the military music was popular in Japan, and many people around here had records. I had many of them, so I broke and buried many of them, but I had kept some of them in the trunk. I was worried they would find them, but I was glad I did not have to open the trunk.

Q: Did the sheriff go back after that?

A: He told me to bring the radio and the rifle to the sheriff's office so I took them there a few days later.

Q: Do you remember if there were anything besides radio and rifle? What about cameras?

A: We took cameras, also. A few weeks later we were told to pick up the radio. They had disassembled the shortwave radio so that we could not listen to the shortwave but we could listen to the local news. In those days we wanted to listen to Japanese news such as the announcement from the Imperial Headquarters.

Q: Weren't you suspected?

A: No, not specially. That was the end of it.

Q: I heard that some ministers, especially Buddhist ministers and officers of Kenjin Kai were suspected. Did you have such experience?

A: Two or three newspapermen from Fresno were arrested. In those days late Mr. Sakamoto who was the president of the Japanese Association knew the sheriff well. He asked the sheriff not to arrest any more Japanese as we would not sabotage against the government, and when the order comes from the government for us to evacuate we would obey the order and evacuate. He also sent a cable to a Congressman in Washington asking him to help us stating our position. The Congressman helped us, too. Central California was good on the whole, but Delano was not. All Japanese men there were arrested no matter what their occupations were.

Q: How old were your oldest child then?

A: She was 9, the next one was 7 and the youngest son was 5.

Q: When did you enter the assembly center?

A: It was in May of 1942. It was on my birthday.

Q: How was your life from the time of Pearl Harbor attack and the time you went into the assembly center?

A: There was a standstill order and we could not go outside the 5-miles radius from home. We had to get permission to go to Fresno. It was almost impossible to go anywhere.

Q: Was the order for all Japanese?

A: Yes, it was applied to all Japanese

Q: What had become of people who had been teaching at Japanese language schools?

A: I heard that Japanese teachers of Madera Japanese Language School were questioned but they were not arrested.

Q: What was the attitude of your white friends?

A: Their attitude changed. For instance, the landlord whoses ranch I worked for over 10 years did not pay me about $2,000 which was coming to me on the strength of the law that stated they could not pay more than the living allowance to aliens at one time. But as I had taken steps to collect it, it was sent to me through the attorney when we went to the relocation center in Arizona.

Q: How did you go to the assembly center from Madera?

A: We went there by a car, and the person who bought the car drove it back from there. The amount of luggage we could take was very limited, so we could only take something like an overnight suitcase.

Q: How long did you stay at the assembly center?

A: We were there for about 2½ months.

Q: Did you stay there till around the end of July or first part of August?

A: Yes, till around the latter part of July.

Q: Whereabout in Arizona did you go to?

A: We went to Camp II in Gila, Arizona, which was about 40 miles from Phoenix. There were Camp I and Camp II in Gila. The capacity of Camp II was around 22,000 to 23,000.

Q: What was your biggest worries when you went to the assembly center?

A: I was most concerned about the children's education. When a large group of people live together, there are many children who are around the same age as yours outside your door. Of course there were grade school to highschool in relocation centers. There were regular teachers but most of them were temporary teachers, so the quality of education was not like the public school outside. I think that was the biggest concern of the parents who had children.

Q: Were you worried as to what would become of them in the future?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Whom could you consult with when you had such concers?

A: Higher ups in the administration office and ministers of different religion gave counsel and helped us in many ways. Quite a few people who never knew about Christianity before they went to camp were led to Christianity through the pastors' kindness and were baptized in the camp. Even the Buddhist boys and girls who did not believe in any religion were married by Christian pastors.

Q: How was it when you went from the assembly center to the relocation center in Gila?

A: At that time we were very lonely. The ladies of a church in Selma encouraged us saying, "We don't think that kind of condition will last long. We will remember you in our prayers, so please be patient. Before long favorable time will come for Japanese."

Q: Did you go to Gila by a train?

A: Yes, we did. We could not see outside as the blinds were closed, so we did not know where we were. There were MPs on each coach.

Q: It must have been a hard trip in summer with children?

A: Yes, it was. Our youngest son was 5 years old, so it was not too bad, but it was hard for people with babies.

Q: About how many days did it take to go from here to Gila?

Q: We left here in the morning and arrived there late that afternoon.

Q: Then you didn't have to sleep on the train, didn't you?

A: No, we didn't. But when we arrived there it was raining hard. I heard that it didn't rain much in Arizona, but we were caught in a heavy rain storm. By the time we arrived there the barracks were almost ready, but such things as water pipes were not quite ready, so we wanted to dig the ground. Anyway, such a huge installation was built in the middle of the desert, so it was not easy.

Q: What kind of a place was Gila?

A: It was a very hot place. Fresno was hot, too, but it was not like Fresno. It was very dry. That is why, even in winter we just wore shirts, and seldom wore sweaters or jeckets.

Q: How was the scenary there?

A: It was not much of a scenary. There was desert as far as we could see with giant cactus growing here and there.

A: Did you grow trees in the camp?

A: In the second year we were there, the office gave us seeds for lawn and caster beans which grew up to 7 or 8 feet and made good shades. Japanese made the camp green in a year.

Q: We there any amusements and hobbies in the camp?

A: Yes, there were. I want to show you something.

Q: I wish I could tape your story about the birds. Did you know such thing since you were young?

A: No. I did some painting, but I had never done a sculpture. When thousands of people live together, there are masters in all kinds of fields. He told me that he would teach me to sculpture as I could do some painting. I forgot the teachers name, but those who were interested gathered and formed a club, and we even had exhibitions.

Q: You said you showed and sold them, but how did people like them?

A: People liked them very much. I made about 500 of them and sold many of them.

Q: What else did you make besides wall tapestry, breastpins for women?

A: I made flower vases and big mugs.

Q: Did you curve them out of wood?

A: Yes, I did. In Arizona there are mosquito trees which is very hard. I think there is only one company in Japan that makes lumber from that tree.

After a while we were calmed down and took up hobbies. We also built outdoor stage as there were many entertainers such as people who recite Shigin (recitation of Chinese poesms), sing nagauta and actors.

Q: Did you have a job?

A: Yes, I did..

Q: What kind of a job did you have?

A: When I entered the camp I thought I would take a vacation and do nothing, but then I could not eat if I did not work, so I washed pots in the mess hall.

Q: Did everyone work in the camp?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: What other jobs were there besides work in the mess hall?

A: Gila had good weather and had plenty of water from Colorado River so we grew vegetables and melon.

Q: Was that inside the camp?

A: Yes, it was. There was much spacious land outside the camp, so we grew vegetables and melon there and shipped them to other camps in cold places such as Arkansas where they could not grow them.

Q: Did you grow vegetables and fruits?

A: Yes, we grew watermelon and cantaloupe.

Q: Did you send them to camps where they could not grow them?

A: Yes, we did. Our camp in Gila received plenty of food such as bread and macaroni, but some Japanese were not satisfied with just the food rationed from the office, so with the permission from the office Japanese opened canteen about 1½ year later, and ordered and sold such food as sashimi.

Q: How was the daily routine in the camp?

A: Everybody had some kind of a job; farm work, working in mess halls, janitorial work, fixing barracks, carpentry and electric work. We worked every other day, and on our days off we went out of the camp and picked up iron wood to make flower vase and other things.

Q: What did the women do?

A: I think they were in Paradise. Most cooks in mess halls were men. Of course women worked as waitresses and set tables at meal time, but they only worked every other day. They learned flower arrangements, sewing and other hobbies. For women who used to cook and wash clothes and did everything outside, I think it was like a Paradise there.

Q:Did you experience any hardship in the camp?

A: I did not experience any hardship, but the fact that we were living within the barbed wired fence and did not have freedom was always in my mind and troubled me. We had plenty of food.

We had delivery of Japanese language newspaper from Colorado every day, so we read the news of the Pacific War as it progressed. At first when we read that many Japanese battleships were sunk, and off-shore of Philippines was bristle with masts of sunken ships we said that was ridiculous, but by and by we came to think that it was true. Up to the time the war situation became serious, we thought Japan would win the war if we put up for 2 to 3 years and Japan would send us ships to take us back to Japan. And when that day came we would march off in triumph. People talked like that at meetings and we hoped that day would come. But as the American government treated us more than enough during the war

I came to feel that I did not want either American or Japanese side to lose the war. I just wanted them to stop fighting. I think most people started to think that way.

Q: Could you listen to news on the radio?

A: After we went to Gila, Japanese Red Cross sent us Kikkoman shoyu which we wanted badly. I remember each person received a quart of shoyu as ration, so I think our family of 5 recieved a gallon and a quart of shoyu. At that time I was grateful to the Red Cross.

Q: Was anything else rationed besides shoyu?

A: I think that was the only thing rationed.

Q: There were problems concerning the loyalty in the camp. weren't there?

A: Yes, there were. At that time there were troubles in the camp. I still remember that there was the Gila Young Men's & Women's Association in our camp. It was made up mostly of people who were born in America but went to Japan when they were young and were educated in Japan. There were about 400 to 500 of those people. They organized the Gila Young Men & Women's Association and were in high spirits. They were in No-No group, and refused to join the American Army. Those people were transfered to Tule Lake.

Q: Was the camp divided into loyal group and disloyal group at that time?

A: Yes. People in the loyal group were not necessarily loyal, but they thought they had to endure for a while under the circumstance. There was quite a bit of friction between these 2 groups in the camp.

Q: Were there any incidents?

A: Yes, there were. Those people who went to Tule Lake said, "We have pride as subjects of Japanese Empire. Do you want your security even by betraying your own country?" There was much friction. I have never been to Tule Lake, but I hear that kind of spirit was quite strong there.

Q: Did you worry about your children's future?

A: Although the Army had put Japanese in relocation camps, it was quite a financial burden to keep up the camps, so, as the war progressed they encouraged Japanese to go out of the camp. In those days I thought about going to East, but even if we did I was the only one in the family who could work as our children were still young and my wife had to take care of them. As we had left our property in California, we wanted to go back to California, so we decided not to go to East. Some people who did not leave anything in California, or did not have small children left the camp.

Q: How long after you entered the camp was it?

A: It was about 2½ years after we entered the camp. We were in Gila camp for about 3 years.

Q: Was it towards the end?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Did many people leave the camp for the East coast?

A: Yes, they did. There was a rumor that the government might not let us go back to the West Coast even after the war ended. But some lawyers in the camp said that kind of rumor is ridiculous. When the peace comes we have rights to go back to California, and we can insist on it. Even people who went to the East Coast gradually came back to California where they used to live after living on the East Coast 3 to 5 years.

Q: How do you think each person decided to say "Yes" or "No" about the loyalty?

A: There were some exceptions, but I think most Japanese had the same kind of feeling. Even though we were living under American government, I think nobody wanted America to win and Japan to lose the war. Most people thought that no matter how much fuss we made in the camp nothing could be done, so we had better stay calm. But on the other hand there were people who wanted to go to Tule Lake and return to Japan immediately and serve the country.

Q: What was the feeling of most people in the "Yes group "?

A: As far as the love for Japan was concerned, I think everybody had the same feeling. But under the circumstance people who left property and business in California wanted to think about their future and wanted to act calmly. They were the moderates.

Q: I think people had all kinds of feeling, so it was difficult to answer"yes" or "no". What was your opinion about asking such questions?

A: It was not an interrogation, but an officer asked me what I thought about the Pacific War. I said, "The war is a bad thing. This is no question about it." Then he asked me what I thought about the Pearl Harbor attack. I said that it might not have been good that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor no sooner than she declared war. As we saw in the movie, "Tora, Tora, Tora!" Ambassadors Kurusu and Nomura tried hard to get diplomatic solution. I said, "I think there was a reason that Japan had to attack Pearl Harbor." I think some Americans understood our situation.

Kusunoki: Recently Japanese history books have started writing that there were diplomatic negotiations before the Pearl Harbor attack.

Kurokawa: I think Japan had to take such an action because there was no alternative. I don't think Japan wanted to fight not only America but the whole world. I am proud even Japan lost the war. I was naturalized and became an American citizen after the war, but I still feel that way about Japan.

Q: Were there any young Niseis drafted from the camp?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: What do you think about that?

A: I think Niseis did a good thing. After the war ended and we came home, we started a movement to acquiere American citizenship among Japanese community. We collected unexpected amount of money for political action in Washington, D.C., and by that we acquired American citizenship. By the distinguished services of the 442nd Battalion, Japanese were recognized. Some people criticized Japanese Americans fighting for America, but I think it was good that they did.

Q: Did you come back from the camp around 1945?

A: It was in August of 1945. We came back in time for the public schools to start in September.

Q: Did you come back to Madera?

A: The house in Madera was not vacant, so I went to Fowler where a relative of mine lived. He had leased his land and house to a white family. When he wrote and told them when he was coming back, they vacated the house and were waiting for him, so we stayed there.

Q: Did somebody live in your house in Madera?

A: We did not go back to Madera. We stayed in Fowler for a few month during the grape harvest time while the children attended school. Then we went to Livingston and helped a family whose four sons were in the service. We stayed there for about 2 years until their sons came home. Then we bought another piece of land in Madera and went there.

Q: What did you do with your property when you went to assembly center from Madera?

A: We left everything to a good white neighbor, but when we came back he was not there. He had cleared all my belongings and had gone somewhere. I contacted the Sheriff's office and WRA, but to no avail. It was much financial loss.

Q: Didn't you own the house in Madera?

A: No, we were leasing it. What I had were farm implements and furniture. I don't know what had happened to my neighbor. Someone said he went to Washington, but we never found out.

Q: Have you heard about people who stayed in hostels after they came back from camps?

A: Yes, the Methodist Church opened its classroom and let those poeple stay there until they found place to live. The Buddhist church did the same.

Q: How about the people who lived around here?

A: For a while there was shortage of houses, so some people lived in barns like the pioneer Iseis did. That kind of living went on for a while.

Q: Did you find work right away after you came back?

A: The employers welcomed Japanese, but as there was pressure from the white people from other districts, and Mexicans and the blacks, at first they seemed to be waiting to see how things stood. As Japanese came back more amd more, they started hiring Japanese here and there. The employers liked Japanese.

Q: Why was it?

A: Because there was a reputation since the pioneers' time that Japanese are faithful and hard-working people. The only trouble was the housing. They could not force Mexicans who were living in the house to move out until they had a place to go, so they had to wait during that time.

Q: How was the atmosphere when you came back?

A: It was bad for a while. Mr. Hamaguchi's ranch which I took chare of in Livingston had about 160 acres, so I needed about 10 ranch hands and 40 to 50 farm laborers during the harvest season. When I went to hire laborers for pruning, people would not come because there was a pressure for working for Japanese. Therefore, for about a month to 1½ month I did not know if I could manage the ranch or not. That was the first part of November. In Livingston Japanese Americans owned about 6,000 acres of land, so if farm laborers did not work for Japanese they did not have any job.

Q: Was it the Yamato Colony?

A: Yes, it was. When Christmas time came, they needed money, so one by one they started coming, and I did not have any trouble after that.

Q: Were your children ever given hard times at school?

A: About 80% of people in Yamato Colony were Japanese Americans, so they were lucky in that respect. I think, aroundd Fresno where there were many Mexians, blacks and whites some children were given hard times by being calle, "Japs".

Q: About how many Japanese were in Livingston when you were there?

A: I don't know the exact figure, but I think there were about 70 families including Winton and Merced district. In those days each Japanese family had an average of 3 to 4 children.

Q: As an Issei do you have any advise to Sanseis?

A: I think they should keep the good points of Japanese such as respect of edders and loyal to one's country. I am happy that some young people in the community and in the church are interested and want to learn about Japanese culture through Japanese language. I want them to keep that kind of desire from now on.

Q: In general, Niseis did not have that kind of idea, didn't they?

A: I think Sanseis rather than Niseis have stronger awareness. The reason for that is when Niseis were growing up there was strong anti-Japanese sentiment. As they grew up in that kind of atmosphere they hesitated to speak Japanese on the sidewalk. It is good to assimilate, but Japanese are still Japanese. I think we should keep the good quality of Japanese and strive for the friendly relationship between Japan and America. In that respect Sanseis have grown up in the atmosphere in which they are proude to be Japanese Americans, so I think Sansei are more aware of Japanese characteristics and will preserve ot. My grandson who has become a doctor says we should not exclude other nationalities but join hands with them.

Q: Do you have any thoughts as an Issei Christian?

A: Young people now have many activities outside the church, but I wish they would think about the pioneer Isseis who built churches and kept their faith till today, and lead their lived based on the teaching of the Bible. Then I think they would become more active in church.